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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ABUJA 000061

SIPDIS
STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/W, AF/RSA, DRL, INR/AA
STATE PLEASE PASS TO DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY (LUTE), ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY (HEYMAN), AND OFFICE OF INTERN
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PASS TO AMEMBASSY MALABO

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [FAIR](#) [OVIF](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA'S VICE PRESIDENT JONATHAN REASSURES U.S. HOMELAND
SECURITY DEPUTY SECRETARY LUTE OF "TOTAL COMMITMENT" AGAINST
TERRORISM

REF: EMAIL:FW: FW: (CO) NIGERIA'S VICE PRESIDENT JONATHAN REASSURES
U.S. HOMELAND SECURITY DEPUTY SECRETARY LUTE OF "TOTAL COMMITMENT"
AGAINST TERRORISM

CLASSIFIED BY: James P. McAnulty, Political Counselor, U.S.
Department of State, Political Section; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Vice President Goodluck Jonathan reassured U.S.
Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Deputy Secretary Jane
Holl Lute of the commitment of the Nigerian Government
(GON) to aviation security and counter-terrorism efforts
during a January 12 meeting. He lamented the December 25
attempted bombing by Nigerian suspect Farouk Umar
Abdulmutallab and asked that the U.S. Government not
stigmatize Nigeria for the actions of an individual whose
actions contradicted Nigerian culture and beliefs.
Jonathan stated that he thought the GON would soon approve
the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (GON) on air
marshals after a few more administrative discussions. The
Vice President, like so many others in government, reduced
the December 25 event to a single act by a primarily
expatriate Nigerian. The senior leadership of Nigeria
continues to fail to acknowledge the greater problem of
external links with extremism. END SUMMARY.

NEED FOR GREATER INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

[1](#)2. (C) DHS Deputy Secretary Lute, accompanied by
Ambassador, DHS Chief of Staff David Pressman, Assistant
Secretary for Policy David Heyman, Associate General
Counsel for Operations and Enforcement Brad Kieserman,
Transportation Security Administration (TSA) International
Affairs Director Robert Rottman, Embassy Political
Counselor, and Regional Affairs Chief, met January 12 with
Vice President Jonathan at his conference room at the
Presidential Villa. Discussions focused on international
cooperation to promote aviation security and prevent future
attempted bombings of civilian airliners similar to the
December 25 attack by a Nigerian national. She noted that
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terrorism represented a problem not just for the U.S.,
Nigeria, and the Netherlands, but for all responsible
nations. She encouraged greater international cooperation
on information sharing and use of technology to thwart the
efforts of al-Qaeda and other terrorists. The Deputy
Secretary also offered her best wishes for the recovery of

ailing President Yar'Adua and congratulations on Nigeria's golden jubilee later this year.

GON OPPOSED TO TERRORISM AND DESIGNATION

13. (C) Vice President Jonathan welcomed the U.S. Delegation and expressed GON "sadness" at the December 25 attempted attack on a U.S. airliner. Noting that the GON has adopted numerous counter-terrorism conventions, he expressed surprise and indignation at USG designation of Nigeria as a "country of interest." He described the alleged actions of Abdulmutallab as "alien to the country's culture and values," asserting that the education of this Nigeria-born individual largely outside of Nigeria had "modified" his thinking. Jonathan insisted that, while Nigeria has occasionally witnessed violence by domestic extremists, such groups have never employed suicide bombing. Characterizing terrorism as an "offense against humanity," Jonathan noted that Abdulmutallab allegedly targeted not just Americans but passengers of other nationalities, possibly including Nigerians, whom he described as the world's "most-traveled human beings." Jonathan expressed concern that the designation of Nigeria as a "country of interest" would stigmatize Nigerians and subject them to unfair treatment. To date, he noted, he has received reports daily of mistreatment of citizens, particularly in Europe and Asia.

GON "TOTALLY COMMITTED"

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14. (C) The Vice President repeatedly assured the Deputy Secretary and her delegation that the GON remained "totally committed" to promoting aviation security and fighting terrorism. He pledged that the GON would "work quickly" to approve a proposed MOU on air marshals to allow this program to "take off" soon. Jonathan said Nigeria would readily accept suggestions and assistance from the U.S. and other nations to address any deficiencies. He noted that he has held numerous internal meetings, including with members of the National Assembly, to "head off" angry and counter-productive reactions to the U.S. on the designation of Nigeria as a "country of interest." As a peace-loving nation actively involved in peace-keeping missions in Africa, the Vice President declared that Nigeria would always oppose terrorism. Lute, recalling her experience as a former United Nations peace-keeper, remarked that she had taken careful note of the Vice President's views. She expressed interest in moving forward on counter-terrorism efforts with the GON in a positive spirit of commitment and determination.

COMMENT

15. (C) Designation as a "country of interest" continues to attract GON anger and resentment. Nigerians, however, must do more to combat terrorist links, but first they must

admit and acknowledge such links exist in Nigeria; thus far, they have refused to do this. This will be the first step needed for GON counterparts to transform largely verbal commitments into concrete actions and results. Recognition of the problem and prompt approval of the air marshals MOU, for example, would present tangible evidence of GON commitment to tackle the problem head on and enhance aviation security to fight terrorism. END COMMENT.

16. (U) Deputy Secretary Lute departed Abuja before having
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the opportunity to clear on this telegram.
SANDERS